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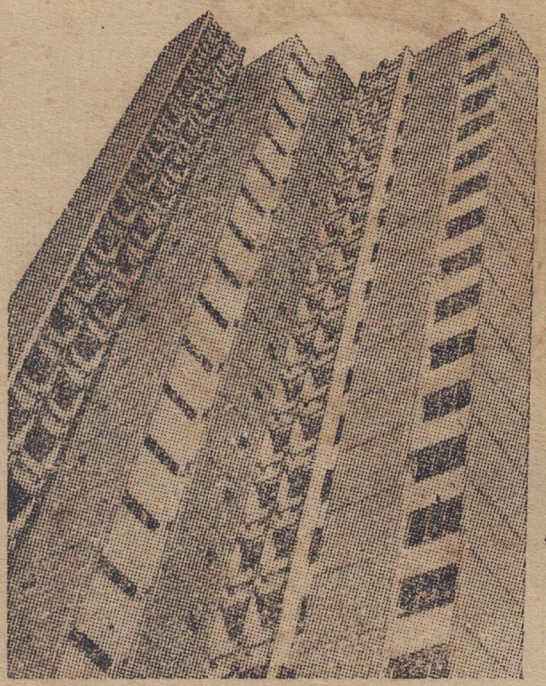

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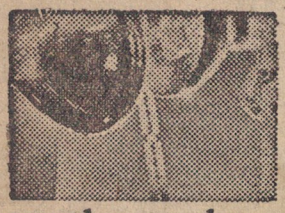

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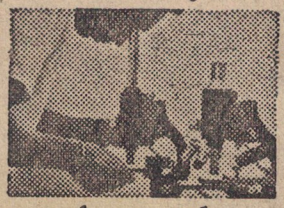

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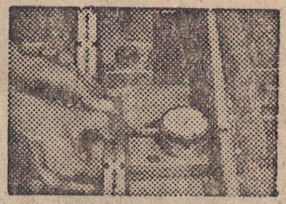

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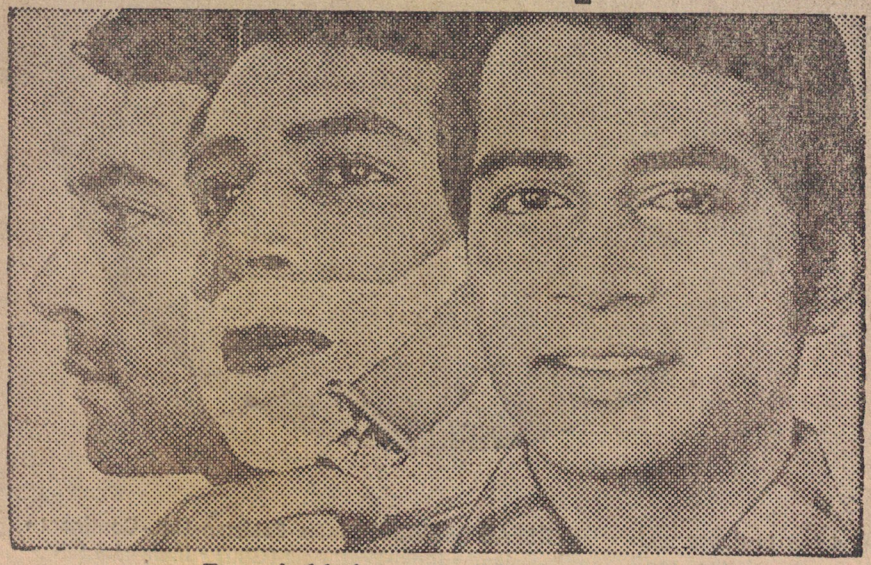

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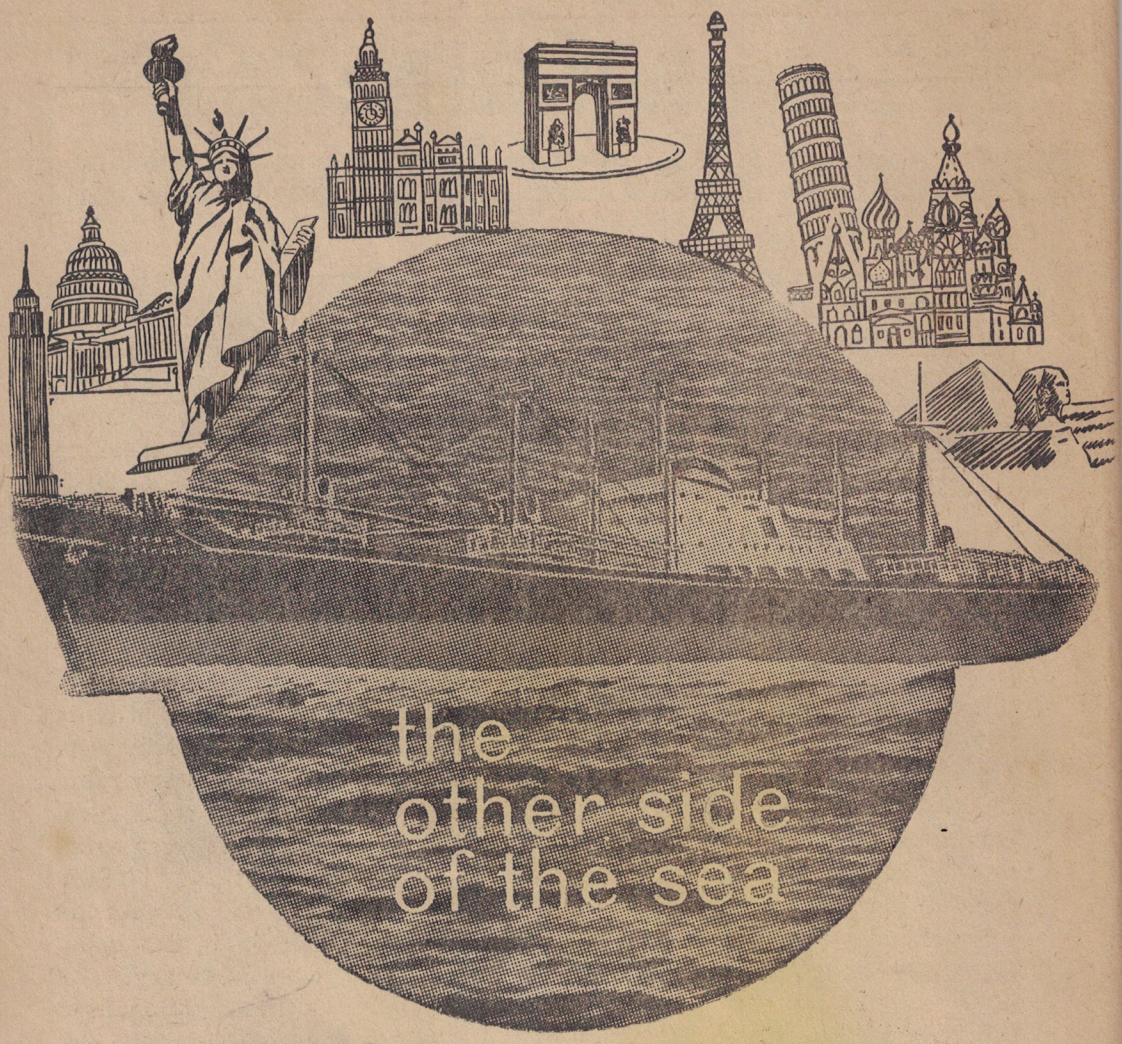

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AGENTS IN ALL PRINCIPAL PORTS OF THE WORLD

SSTA'S SSN

OPINION

Vol. XII 25th MAY 1971 No. 4

THE PUBLIC VOICE

"BUT why", murmured a pleasant-featured, middle-aged lady in a dark green sari, looking up from the morning paper she had been reading as she stood in the queue at the terminus, "What is the justification ?" "I beg your pardon", said the thin-faced, bespectacled economic journalist who stood ahead of her, turning sideways, "Where you speaking to me ?" "No, I wasn't", said the lady "Though now that I come to think of it, I suppose I was, to you and in fact to the public in general. What I want is enlightenment. It's this nationalisation of general insurance I've been reading about. Why is it being done ? What is the justification ?"

"You're very much behind the times, madam, if you don't mind my saying so", said the economic journalist. "To ask for justification for nationalising anything, in these days it just isn't done. Why, according to present-day thinking in all the quarters that matter, nationalisation is its own justification. No one needs to justify it. Questions like yours indicate I'm afraid what they term a reactionary outlook, something that according to the Prime Minister must be vigorously rooted out. So be careful, lady, and think Progressive ; you can't go wrong doing that and it's very safe ; no likelihood of even being pruned, leave alone rooted out." "Stop making fun of me", said the lady smiling, "And answer my question seriously. I really want to know of this. For whose good is this being done ?" "Let me attempt an answer", said a smart young secretary, "I've some experience of work in both non-nationalised and nationalised businesses. If you don't want to do your work, and want to talk big, agitate continually for increases and amenities, be rude all round, join the nationalised business, and if you're so made, be happy. So, whoever's good this is being done for, it won't be for the good of the country as a whole. That's my view."

"Look", said the economic journalist, "let's get this straight". Turning to the lady "I suppose you own some shares in a general insurance company that's been doing a good job, giving you a reasonable dividend, and you feel, why is my property being taken away, why am I being deprived. After all, fifty-five per cent of the company's profits go to the Government as taxes ; what comes to the share-holder is again taxed as part of his or her income. Surely all that combined makes quite a good dollop for Government ; why does it grudge us the little we get for the money we've put in ? You also no doubt say to yourself, Government has ample powers under the existing law to prevent the company from doing anything it doesn't want it to do. It is in fact more Government's

creature than mine. Why then this outrage?" The lady nodded "Yes, I have a hundred shares and I know of many little people like me who have such small holdings. I've not heard of any scandals about our company or indeed any other large general insurance companies. No shady business, no tax-evasion, everything according to rule, no clients being done down, Government supervision and inspection all the time, yet this! It's quite beyond me."

"Madam, your bewilderment is understandable", said the economic journalist, "But you see you are proceeding on premises different from those adopted by the Government. You think this action is based on economic grounds and after consideration of merits. Nothing of the kind. There is no valid economic reason for doing this, nor on merits would any even moderately sensible Government involve itself in it. Government's ground is only one, ideology. Says the Prime Minister the public sector must be the dominant sector in the economy. It can't be that without extensive taking over by Government. So nationalisation, and general insurance makes a neat, compact packet to add to the public sector. That's all, really. You're a victim to dogma, pure and simple, if that's any satisfaction to you. Apologists, economic and political, to produce specious arguments to justify in this matter the cause of Government to the innocent and the unwary, there will be no lack of, but you won't be taken in if you remember what I've said."

"But where will this end then?" asked the young secretary. "What is safe from dogma's onslaught?" The economic journalist shrugged his shoulders and looked into the distance. "Nothing, young lady, nothing", said a white-moustached, khadi-clad old gentleman, who had been listening attentively, "not even the gold chain round your neck or the umbrella under my arm. It really boils down to, Is the holding of property legitimate? If it is, then the property may be whatever you like, general insurance shares, my watch, your bag or anything else. If it isn't, if as the Communists declare, it is the proceeds of theft, then even if authority permits you to enjoy such of those proceeds as you may have for sometime, it is justified in taking them away whenever it feels it should." "Oh come", said the secretary "I bought this chain out of my own wages. I agree it is property but it's my rightful property. No Government can just take it away like that." The old man turned to the lady and said "And how did you get your insurance shares?" She replied "I bought them from the bonuses my firm gave for four years, a few each year I think." "You have your answer, miss", said the old man.

"But this is sheer misrepresentation", said loudly a long-haired, tight-trousered young man, "Government pays compensation, doesn't it? Well then, what is there to complain about? If it takes away property in one form, it gives you property in another form, so what grievance can there be? I think people like you are just reactionary and I wouldn't be at all sorry to see whatever you have seized." "I believe I have occasionally seen you riding a powerful red motor-bicycle", said the old man. "Your own, I suppose?" "Yes, sir, definitely my own, considering I earned the

nine thousand rupees I paid for it by doing special odd-time jobs for a whole year", said the young man. "No doubt you added those amounts to your income in your tax-return too", said the old man, and then seeing the flush on the young man's face, "But let's leave that, it's not relevant here. Now suppose Government took over your motor-bike, nationalised it, and awarded you four thousand rupees compensation, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you ? You'd have received property in another form for your property in the form of your bike." "Happy" almost shouted the young man "How can you be so absurd ! Do you know I can easily get fourteen thousand cash for that bike any day ? I wouldn't stand being paid less. I'd go to the Court. It would see I got my rights. Didn't it make Government give proper amounts for the bank shares ?"

"But what if the Court had no powers in the matter ?" asked the old man. "You know it hasn't sometimes, for instance as regards land. In Kerala, very recently, where it hadn't, for land which the Government itself said was worth eighty thousand rupees an acre, it fixed as compensation, two thousand rupees an acre. Very sound, wasn't it ?" "Oh, but this is preposterous, preposterous, sheer robbery", said the young man. "They couldn't do that with us." "They couldn't at present, perhaps, because the Court still has power", said the economic journalist, "But as you must all be aware since you read the daily papers, Government's strong and concentrated endeavour is to take away the Court's power in such matters. Once that happens, it can fix with Parliament's approval—and think of the enormous majority it has—whatever it likes for the general insurance shares or for anything else it nationalises, and you or I or whoever is concerned, can do nothing but bear it, and watch the march forward to the ownership by the State of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, to say nothing of the goods and services that result from them, and the savings that accrue because of them."

"No Government could really do this kind of thing, which didn't hold that property was theft and that therefore it was entitled to take it away from the thieves or the receivers of stolen pproperty. Think of that as you work away and count how soon the month will be over so that you can get your salaries, the wages you may think of hard work, but according to the Government concept, of sin", said the old man. "And you know, so determined does it seem to get the power away from the Court, that one of its permanent servants actually appears here in our city and delivers an address to—of all bodies—the Society of Goodwill and Culture, informing it and us and the Supreme Court of how with the new composition of the Supreme Court and the changed atmosphere in the country the Court may be persuaded to reconsider its decision. A lawyer speaking to his brief no doubt ; a modern committed public servant ! Alas that the virtue of anonymity should have been so completely lost in our public service."

Said a bare-headed ancient in white shorts and bush-shirt, "These very interesting remarks cause me to reflect on the strange situation that

(*Continued on page* 30)

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(*Continued on page* 30)

NAXALITES

A nation too has a right
to its bouts of sickness
to swollen lip and cyanosis
and the rawness of an ulcer-crater

A mother has the right
not only to breed children
but also to watch them
dying on her hands

Throats slit from ear to ear
in bloody crescents
the young are dying on the streets

limbs when pulled out from the marsh
are fermenting like illicit hooch
The body crumbles at the touch
—a fragment of the bog already

Between the wail of the victim
and the silence of God
stretches that infinity
we have named despair

This art form started
with an anti-hero stance
—castration of the father-image
Tagore, Subhash or Aurobindo
They burnt ledgers of money-lenders
behaded statues
and lastly descended
on the live throat
—artistic activity
as the critics tell you
spills over from its genre

You are holding your guts in vain
they are spilling on the road
like snakes from a serpent-charmer's basket

Vision is a membrane
perforated by pipe-guns
The furtive look, the ferret eye
We've seen the inward questing look
we have seen the dawn of fear

We hold seminars on the gap
between meaning and communication
between generation and generation
the varied shades of the far-left
abstract levels of power
and the personality cult
while Bengal like a tormented derrick
dances on the birth-pangs
of a tidal wave

and Naxalites walk the land
like a marriage party
heralded by fire-works.

K. N. Daruwalla

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RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIA'S POLITICAL PARTIES

A. G. NOORANI

RECENTLY, "Le Monde" published an article by the General Secretary of France's Radical Party and the prophet of the new technological society, M. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, entitled "The People are adults, are the Parties ?" It should be compulsory reading for every student of Indian politics.

After Mrs. Indira Gandhi's landslide victory, the Opposition parties have been thinking furiously about their future course of action. What is at stake is their own survival. Indian democracy will be greatly affected by the courses these parties now adopt, for it is on the evolution of a viable democratic alternative that the future of democracy in this country rests.

Even for a country as far advanced as his, M. Servan-Schreiber is emphatically of opinion that "France can only be made modern, livable and to the people's own measure by transforming the political parties, not by rewriting the laws."

He has none too high an opinion of French political parties. "Have the parties as they stand the capacity to carry this out ? The answer is all too obvious and it is a cruel one. None of them has yet proved capable of changing itself. Gnawed at from above, undermined from below, they are trying to avoid death. One might say that is the extent of their ambition.

"Their leaders are lost in a fog of abstraction and academic debate. They are endlessly involved in discursive argument, in professorial controversy, obsessed with form and with their liturgy of confrontation. Behind the scenes they are sunk in intrigue, far from the public eye, clinching deals or venting quarrels, jockeying rivalries, swapping votes, begging for funds. The law of the underworld."

One would think he was writing of our political parties, particularly of their behaviour during the mid-term parliamentary election campaign.

But he sees hopeful signs. In the recent municipal elections in France, he wrote, "People did not hesitate over the choice between ideological politics and the politics of practical life.

"In every region, and in almost every town, coalitions arose naturally and spontaneously, cemented by nothing more than a will to act on essential questions, those of daily life—urban problems, housing, health, education, professional training, public utilities."

Clearly, like many others, M. Servan-Schreiber wants a break with ideology. He is sanguine that that is possible. "We are faced with an exceptional opportunity : forced out of the Middle Ages of ideology by

circumstances, politics can now embrace reality and become intelligible."

The specific changes he suggests in party organisations may not be relevant to our political scene. What is relevant is his advice that the political parties must have the courage to break with a past "which has been nothing but a series of political failures."

Ignore the Congress (R), the Communists, and the Jan Sangh and which of the other national political parties can boast of being a success ? Let me first explain why these three are to be ignored. The Congress (R) has just won an impressive victory. Why should it break with its rewarding 18-month past ? However, if the Congress (R) is not to go the way of its parent, it will also have to think of basing its future on policy and performance rather than on the image of one individual.

The Communist Parties are not only fundamentally opposed to the democratic system but are so anchored to their foreign mentors that any break with the past for them means a break with their own selves, a revolt against their very organism as parts of an international movement. Significantly, the CPI (M), when rejected first by Moscow and later by Peking, did not try to become an Indian Communist Party. Instead, it forged links with their Communist Mecca, North Korea.

As for the Jan Sangh, as has been pointed out before (*Opinion*, March 30, 1971) its growth is completely restricted by its subordination to the RSS as the latter's political arm.

So, we come to the Congress (O), the PSP, the SSP and the Swatantra Party. They tell us that what moves them is ideology. The Congress (O), after posturing for a while as the legitimate successor battling against a usurper, has at long last settled down at the Bombay Session to mere "me-too-ism". It will continue the same posture except that now it professes to be the successor to the ideological heritage rather than the organizational legacies of the undivided Congress. The ten-point programme which it was prepared to water-down has become the received doctrine once again. There will be no effort to think afresh.

If the Congress (O) attacks the Congress (R) on the score of legitimacy, the PSP and the SSP do so on the ground of genuineness—we are the socialists true ; you are the frauds, even if highly successful frauds.

The PSP was only too willing to have a liaison with the Congress (R). Jilted at the last moment, it is embittered today. But Mr. Prem Bhasin, its General Secretary, is a perceptive observer of the political situation and his analysis in a recent issue of the Party journal (*Janata*, May Day 1971) deserves attention. "The euphoria over Smt. Gandhi's brilliant success may not last long. Stark problems will soon begin to stare everyone in the face : price rise, black money, land ceilings, enhanced taxation and youth frustration."

He adds, "Interested more in power than in its use for tackling and solving the maladies that afflict the nation, the Congress (R) may rest content with regaining control of the State apparatus at the Union and State levels. On the strength of this power, the Government led by Smt. Gandhi may be able to strike some useful bargains with the super Powers

and may get substantially increased economic aid from them. In the meantime, the emphasis will be on stability and growth rather than social justice and removal of socio-economic disparities. The resultant brew may satisfy the middle and upper middle classes, but it will leave the poor and the downtrodden as frustrated as before if not more. Smt. Gandhi's sixth sense may tell her that something is going on seriously amiss, but she may prove to be helpless. The instrument that she has chosen—the Indian National Congress presided over by Shri Sanjivayya, a body as heterogeneous as its emaciated and discredited parent—will not respond either to the new situation or to her proddings. Herself no ideologue, and without any deep ideological commitment, she may also let things drift in the hope that a few deft strokes in the latter part of her present mandate may do the trick again."

Mr. Bhasin proceeds to warn against complacency. He invites his reader's attention to the happenings in Ceylon and to the support which the CPI(M) and the CPI(ML) have in India. Curiously (or is it significantly ?) he omits the CPI from the dangers.

His recipe is simple. "Socialist consolidation would thus appear to be the need of the hour. It may well provide the last chance for democracy as well as socialism to survive and thrive in India. Personal angularities, personality clashes, individual ambitions and collective inhibitions must all be subordinated to this supreme task. Will all socialists, particularly those who are active in the organised parties, take note of the writing on the wall and rise to the occasion ?"

The entire basis of the consolidation will be an ideology, or rather a slogan,--socialism. In what way will it be different from the ruling Congress ? The sincerity of its commitment to socialism, the strength of its ardour, or the precision and practicability of its programme ?

The partners of the prospective concern, presumably, will be the PSP, the SSP and those from the Congress(O) who have had enough of its brand of socialism and wish to try a different one. Socialism, like Heinz pickles, has very many varieties.

Come to the Swatantra Party and you find its entire credo built on opposition to socialism or, as the Party would call it, anti-Statism. If the Party would face realities it would realise that its credo has been decisively rejected by the Indian electorate. Prof. N. G. Ranga has said (May 4) that "the March poll results suggested that the Swatantra Party should reorient its policies and programmes in harmony with the unmistakable demonstration of the people's impatience for improvement of their social and economic progress." Like the socialists, the Swatantrites, too, have been adamant about maintaining the purity of their own ideology. Neither has been too finicky, though, when it comes to "electoral adjustments".

As a matter of fact this ideological cleavage is as obsolete as it is irrelevant. Both sides will do well to ponder over what Milovan Djilas has written in his latest work "The Unperfect Society".

They will discover that the ideological frameworks they have in-

herited and built upon are an obstacle to progress. "Capitalist and socialist model societies no longer exist. As a matter of fact, they never did exist except in the visions repeated faithfully by academics or dreamers and in the gall-constricted and distorted accounts of revolutionary fighters, which have, for the most part, ended in the sterile but nonetheless terrifying experiments of despots holding sway over human beings and human communities. The concepts communism, capitalism, even socialism—insofar as it does not mean freer personalities, greater rights for social groups, and a more equitable distribution of goods than obtains at present—all belong to earlier ages. And the reason people in the East and in the West still come across these concepts, and why, by all accounts, they will have to contend with them for a long time to come, is to be found in the fact that ideas are like vampires ; ideas are capable of living after the death of the generations and social conditions in and by which they were inspired. Today such vampire ideas persist in the spiritual delirium and putrefaction of contemporary social groups that are in decline.

"Nations, people, the human race are living now in a new world, though their thoughts remain in the old : therein lie humanity's hopes as well as humanity's misfortunes."

If we are to avert such misfortune in India, those of our parties which are committed to democratic values will have to abandon their ideological prejudices in favour of a programmatic approach. They will have to embark on the kind of intellectual exercise which Mr. R. A. Butler undertook after the rout of the Conservatives in the 1945 election and which enabled his Party to re-emerge as a meaningful force. He had to put up with a lot of opposition. As he told a correspondent (*The Times,* May 13, 1971) "the Conservative post-war 'charters' were thought by some people to be socialism at the time". Sir Winston Churchill was not very enthusiastic about them.

Before forming the Swatantra Party, Mr. M. R. Masani discussed with Mr. Ganga Saran Sinha of the PSP the possibility of forming a new Party on a non-ideological and programmatic basis. But nothing came of it.

Is it too much to hope that a debate will now ensue, not to prove which Party holds the secret that will resolve India's problems, but what concretely is the programme that will answer India's needs ? What are the issues of Indian politics today ? What should they be ? Progressivism is not the monopoly of any single political party. A party which adopts a liberal position on, say, the language question may be wholly backward on the question of agrarian reforms. Today they are all stuck with their slogans on each of the many current issues.

If common adversity does not persuade them to discard fond doctrines in preference for sound solutions nothing will. This, of course, requires men of intellectual perspicacity and moral courage and it may well be that since few such men exist in our public life, we are doomed to drift, for better or worse.

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to the beggar's early morning wail

The cocks have turned neurotic
crowing at odd hours of the night

The populace wakes
to mill-sirens, milk-booths, phelgm-bursts

The alarm's ringing peters out
like a boy's arc of piss

The populace wakes
to newsprint, tea and broomdust

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From left to right a committee-smile
photograph of a child starving in peace
photograph of protester happily burning
photograph of soldier dying dutifully bravely
photograph of diplomat dying to laugh

front and profile of an ideological killer
come-home photograph of goneaway boy

ariel-view of graph showing rise in income
close-up haveafacelikemine
rear-view of mob in action
worm's eye-view of Miss India

Bulletin: The weather will continue to be
hot as usual dry as usual
rainfall will be heavymoderatescanty
moonsoon will also be hot
winter will also be hot
open your windows bring your cot outside
if you can't go to Kashmir come to Mussourie

NO SPITTING

MARRIAGE POEM

Fill your verandahs, run to your windows,
a drum-and-trumpet procession is coming your way.

Brass, uniforms and faces make a crumpled din:
the urchins dance as if invited by both families.

If the groom is not on a battered carriage-horse
he is arranged with everyone's children

in a hired car and asking for air
somebody is already fanning in vigourously.

The bride is storing within herself this moment
of gold and scented flowers to make it last

a lifetime. Already, like a block of weeds and stones
the procession is clogging the flow of traffic.

Hastily, someone is assigned to make room
for the music to stroll along the bank of fading houses.

Saleem Peeradina

GOVERNMENT SERVANTS AND THEIR POSITION

M. M. DAVE

OUR Constitution by its very preamble assures the securing to each of us of justice—social, economic and political. Part III of the Constitution further guarantees equality before the law. In practice, however, the Government has by active processes, legislative and executive, divided the citizens of the country into two distinct classes ; the privileged and the unprivileged. The position of the unprivileged is in no way different from that in a state in Rajasthan ruled by the renowned Maharajadhiraj Soorsingh sometime in the fourteenth century. The work of sweeping the palace compounds and the streets of the town, clearing the night soil and attending to other sanitation work was imposed in those days upon the ancestors of those whom we now know as Harijans. As remuneration for these duties, every working individual of this caste was allowed to collect each night four rotis from the palace kitchen. Out of these the earning member and his dependents would eat two the same night, and retain the rest for the next morning. This being insufficient for their sustenance the Bhangis approached the Maharajadhiraj for a suitable increase. When the Maharaja saw these half starved subjects of his collected outside the palace gate, he inquired why they had come there. When he heard their purpose, he lost his temper. The great ruler just could not tolerate the low caste people of his State exhibiting their impudence by joining together and presenting a petition which the Ruler's men termed as nothing short of an over-aweing threat. "Wherefrom am I going to provide you all with more than four rotis per day ? I shall then have to raise taxes and the entire population of the Raj will have to suffer." To the Maharajadhiraj no body could suggest that two more rotis for these underprivileged creatures could be met by reduction of the wasteful expenses on the Royal palaces and on his pleasure trips to various places in the Bharat Varsha from time to time.

"Maharajadhiraj", the Bhangis pleaded, "the artisans get six maunds of food grains, the weavers get three maunds, even the Brahmins who have not to undergo any strain except reciting a few Mantras get one maund of grains per field."

"But I do not give them all that. It is the cultivators who give them. What have I to do with that ?" retorted the Maharajadhiraj. "They are free not to give even one grain."

"How can they afford to say 'No', Maharajadhiraj ? The cultivators dare not displease the artisans or the weavers. Nor can they displease the Brahmins. The artisans would stop making and reparing their carts and ploughs, the weavers would stop weaving for them and the Brahmins would refuse to perform any ceremonies for them. It is not that we are

not skilled enough to undertake any of these occupations. Why, we are able to perform even the religious ceremonies which these illiterate Brahmanas not knowing a word of Sanskrit claim the privilege to do. But to our lot has fallen the work of keeping the town clean. Should the Maharajadhiraj think of not allowing us a few more rotis, we would have to stop working and choose to die of starvation. Even otherwise the aged and the disabled in our families drag on their existence half starved. They die earlier than others. Had suicide not been ordained sin, we would have chosen to end our lives by poisoning ourselves one night", pleaded the Bhangis.

The last sentence uttered by these third rate citizens was sufficient to let loose all the royal terror on them. The Protector of the People ordered, "Whip these enemies of peace, these insolent Bhangis until they realise their sin and repent for it. In the early morning each of my sepoys should go to Bhangiwada and drag every one of these sinners from his hut and ensure that he attends to his work. It should be obvious to every one with the interest of the people at heart that the threat made by these sinners, if allowed to be carried out, would cause an epidemic in the town and endanger the lives of all my subjects. I, the protector of the people, would never tolerate that, whatever might happen to me. The Bhangis do not realise what ruin they plan for the whole of my Rajya. The whips of sepoys will teach them the lesson they very badly need to learn."

Five centuries after the renowned Soorsingh left this world, he has taken rebirth in the form of the Union and the State Governments, while the artisans have been reborn as technicians of large corporations, the weavers as peons and chokidars and the Brahmanas as clerks and other white collar workers in the republic of India that is Bharat. To the Bhangis of the fourteenth century has fallen the lot of being Government servants. Compare their respective positions in our free democratic republic. A person no less than the Minister of Information of Maharashtra says : The minimum monthly emoluments of a class IV employee in Government service is Rs. 146 and maximum Rs. 171, and of a clerk Rs. 213 and 361.

A class IV employee in Government service, say a traffic constable, performs his duties standing in the midst of the road in the hot sun as well as under heavy rains and when the cold winds blow hard. A chokidar or a peon in a bank or other corporation attends to his work only in airconditioned buildings. If the aircondition plant fails he refuses to work. The minimum emoluments he draws work out at Rs. 235 per month, the maximum at Rs. 460 per month plus overtime wage which may come to Rs. 70 per month or so. This peon and this chokidar can strike, can adopt go slow tactics, can cause any amount of inconvenience to any member of the public who may have to deal with his corporation, but a Government constable cannot even form a union. A clerk in a Government treasury does the same work that a clerk handling Government receipts and payments does in the State Bank branch transacting Government cash work. He handles the same coins, the same currency

notes, the same bills, the same challans and same vouchers. The clerk in Government service gets a minimum of Rs. 213 and a maximum of Rs. 361 per month. The clerk in the State Bank gets a minimum of about Rs. 300 and a maximum of Rs. 1,100 per month (inclusive of special allowance) plus overtime allowance which may work out at something like Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 per month.

The clerk in the State Bank has to be confirmed immediately he completes six months' service while a clerk in the Government treasury never gets confirmed unless he passes the Departmental examination. Even after that the Government normally takes about three to four year to treat him as quasi permanent. If the State Bank clerk chooses to leave his job after putting in five years' service he is entitled to the Bank's contribution to provident fund, as also to proportionate gratuity. If he continues in service for 20 years he will receive about Rs. 15,000 by way of the Bank's contribution to his provident fund and interest thereon and about Rs. 7,000 by way of gratuity. His counterpart in a Government treasury would not receive even a naya paisa if he resigned before he was due for retirement. Comparison of the pay structure, dearness allowance, and other benefits between the employees of other corporations like Air India with their counterparts in Government service reveal even greater disparity. In spite of that employees in the corporate sector resort to strikes and extort larger emoluments and benefits from their employers. If however Government servants make any move in that direction, the Governments both at the Centre and in the States, immediately come out with ordinances to send all such agitators to jail, just as Maharajadhiraj Soorsingh came out with his whip immediately the Bhangis appeared before his palace with their humble prayer for two more rotis a day.

The argument the Governments advance is that any increase in the emoluments of the Government servants has to be met from the revenues of the state, while the corporation employees are being paid out of the earnings of their employers. The Governments maintain at a huge cost Departments of Economics but even the experts working in these Departments have not cared to expose the fallacy of this argument. Maharajadhiraj Soorsingh had no experts to advise him. He could not, therefore, realise that the cultivators in his state were passing on maunds and maunds of food grains to the artisans and weavers and Brahmanas out of the gross produce of his fields in which the State had a one-third share. His advisers did not tell him that each mound of grains which an artisan or a Brahmana obtained from his cultivators contained one-third of a maund which represented nothing but the State revenue. In his new incarnation the Maharajadhiraj has economic advisors but with their help or connivance he chooses to close his eyes to the glaring fact that each rupee a corporation in the public sector pays to its employees represents the profit which must go to the State, and even in corporations in the private sector about 55 per cent represents the State's share by way of corporation tax which the State would be entitled to draw if the earnings were not extravagantly spent

Our Constitution says there shall be equal wage for equal work but our Ministers who are under a sacred oath of allegiance to the Constitution administer our economy in such a manner that those who have the ill luck to serve the Government or to work where there are no organised labour unions are always at a disadvantage. The less strenuous the work the higher the wage and the more extravagant the privileges and tax free perquisites; the more strenuous and heavier the work, the less the wage and no privilege.

The Industrial Disputes Act provides that any person who commences or continues an illegal strike or instigates such a strike or finances it, shall be liable to punishment. The Government never prosecutes any employees covered by that Act, though illegal strikes are often resorted to by the employees in the organised sector. The very fact that the Government has to enact an ordinance every time the Government employees think of resorting to a strike for pressing their demand (which the Government has never been able to term as untenable as compared to what the employees in the industrial sector are actually enjoying) amply shows that there is no law on our statute to debar Government servants from resorting to strike. Even then they have to suffer dismissal and imprisonment while their counterparts reap material benefits by breach of the law which has a permanent place on our statute. The principle of collective bargaining is allowed to operate only where the employees work for shorter periods and draw higher emoluments and other benefits but not where the wage is lower and the work more strenuous.

I do not intend to suggest that Government servants should follow the tactics of their counterparts in the industrial sector and upset the working of the Government. What I want to suggest is that the disability of not resorting to collective bargaining imposed on them, should be adequately compensated by allowing them a higher wage and more advantageous benefits as compared to their counterparts in the industrial sector. Further the operation of the principle of collective bargaining should be restricted to the extent necessary for ensuring implementation of the constitutional guarantee of equal wage for equal work, which implies higher wage for more strenuous work and not higher wage for those who can excercise their combined force and starvation wage for those who lack such brute force or are entrusted with such onerous duties that it would be unpatriotic or against the public interest for them to disrupt the service they have to render.

The general public view about Government servants is that they are corrupt and they hardly ever do anything unless they are bribed. Even assuming that this sweeping statement is correct, the very fact that they are being paid much less as compared to their counterpart elsewhere is invariably offered as a counterargument by those who offer and accept bribes. In any case the Government cannot escape the blame for the increasing corruption amongst the lower staff in its service. A Government clerk's minimum wage comes to Rs. 213 per month in Bombay.

Out of this he has to procure acommodation which alone costs him at least Rs. 150 per month. Government has controlled rents but has in effect allowed the owners thereby to charge premium and swell their black-money account. For those who are unable to pay huge premium in un-accounted moneys the only course left open is to agree to have accommodation on leave and licence and pay fantastic rent which the owners term as compensation. This may be as silly as fixing the price of yarn at Re. 1 per lb. and allowing the cotton to be sold at Rs. 3 per lb. But you do not expect a better control of economy by a Government which is but a re-incarnation of Maharaja Soorsingh of the 14th century. Where it wants to oblige some high officer or dignitary the Government itself breaks the Rent Act and obtains accommodations on the fake terms of leave and licence. Not only that but it closes its eyes upon the blatant fact that if rent for accommodation cannot exceed 75 paise per sq. ft., the compensation for that accommodation on leave and licence should be much less, and pays twice the amount.

The Government is not ignorant of the fact that its clerk has to pay compensation for the accommodation he occupies for his residence at about Rs. 150 per month. It further knows that he has to spend about Rs. 30 or so per month for transport to and back from office. On this basis the Government obviously expects its clerk to live on Rs. 33 per month or to earn otherwise by adopting such ways as may be open to him in the course of the performance of his duties. The need for placing the Government servants' wage scales at par with those of their counterparts in the organised industrial sector cannot be over-emphasised. In fact they should be to some extent higher in order to include compensation for being deprived of the benefit of collective bargaining which is always available to the industrial employees. It would then be possible for it to enforce honesty and efficiency amongst its employees. Government service would also then attract more honest and devoted persons and would be to a material extent free from the hold corruption has over it now.

The Government's argument that any rise in the emoluments of its servants would adversely affect its resources for development cannot hold good especially where low-paid employees are concerned (in fact it did not when the Party in power wanted to fight the last election). Government does not take that argument into consideration when it spends about four lacs of rupees every year in taxable terms on each of its ministers and about a lac or so on each legislator. Further when a Managing Director of a business concern wants a bungalow, a car and other modern amenities the Government says: "Yes, Yes, with pleasure. You can have all this free. We shall forgo income tax on a major part of the value so far as you are concerned, and a part of the corporation tax too so far as your employer is concerned. We shall issue suitable departmental instructions for this, whatever be the spirit and object of the law enacted by the Parliament in this behalf." If the legislators say "We are unable to subsist in Delhi on Rs. 31 per day the Government says: 'Well we

introduce a special Act to raise your daily allowance to Rs. 51 per day. The fact that we have allowed you residential accommodation in Delhi at a very concessional rent is no ground for not raising your allowance. All these advantages should also be treated as tax free. Why should we go into the question as to whether the Parliament has or has not the authority to allow anything else than salary and allowances to you under the Constitution and to treat it as tax free? That is the function of the Supreme Court. In any case the Judges will not raise the point regarding payment of income tax on any of these benefits on their actual value, unless they themselves feel like paying the tax on the full value of the Government bungalows they occupy.' But when the question of raising the emoluments of the low paid clerks comes up, the Governments speak in a different voice, the voice which reminds us of the supreme command of Maharaja Soorsingh which some seven centuries ago ordained that the Bhangis be whipped until they were convinced that it was sinful for them to ask for two more rotis a day.

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WORDS TO A NOVICE

The Bhikshu K. & The Lady Abbess Snehlata Damayanti

All your climates will fail,
Seasons glut and perish, habitations burn.
More than change will enter: blazons.
Of doom, turns of violation. Unearthly certainties
You came to rely on, vanish and slide.
Trust nothing but the mouth you love,
Learn to hold. Unlearn and double-track:
Hold nothing.
Be leopard, lizard, fox. Allow
Each of the ten thousand things to take you unawares.
At the end
Drop it. Drop it all.

We know how you will come :
Through the first temperate zones:
Carefully granted roses, plums and other bait.
Through shambles of strife
Carefully tested. False roads shown:
Lysergic Acid heavens, groves of poetry,
Shaded retreats of fame. Sanctuaries.
Subtle nurseries of self. Mountain nests
Of snow and peace and burgundy.
Merciless time itself most careful
Not to bruise your precious skin.
Delicate pear shaped breasts, the strong haunches
Of every earthly paradise. Even finally
A clear appeal to Reason: go back to Mother ;
To houses by the sea, to human love.

When all else fails Buddha Himself
Will then appear, glowing with light and love,
Your heart's delight, offering supernal gifts:
Enlightenment Itself: if only you will cease
What will appear in any case a futile quest.

Reject Him: burning all forms to ashes:
Zealots and Charlatans aflame in every artery
And undergrowth of nerve ;
All avairies open:
Restrain your flight of birds

Then all the Heavens are open,
All Paths attained ; the Sun itself
Burns in your breast. The Gates of Strength

Swing wide. All Trees of Life
Burn in your hand. All things are possible.

Only if you are crafty here and true
To your most hidden service
May you pass through.
Rejecting every fullness which you now hold
Divest yourself of all attainments:
All Suns turn black, all life to death.
Come to the desolate lake, all Logos gone,
And wait for any chance desire to stir.

And if at last She comes
Bringing a last and most improbable erection,
All that is false, erotic, hinged like a furry trap:
Accept it.
Enter my boy, enter
Freely that last temptation, each abyss open
Down to your certain death;
With perfect reliance on the impossible.

Down to your final ground
Where nothing but love survives
Beyond the secret margins of the world:
See where the Black One burns.

(*Continued from Cover III*)

The attitude of the educated male manifest in his public behaviour does not betray any sense of modernity. In a modern society where man and woman participate in all public endeavours, any degree of sexual freedom should be preceded by freedom from sex. But in India the male-female barrier is so marked that every one seems to be very cautious not to violate it. This sexual consciousness introduces artificiality into the public behaviour of both sexes. This is evidently due to sexual frustration arising out of inadequate sexual opportunities. To the average Indian, sex is an obsession and a curiosity. He is in the shackles of sex, struggling to get out of it, but without the necessary courage to shatter them. Modernity is not slavery of sex but enslaving sex. The educated Indian who is today seeking permissiveness in the name of modernity has not succeeded in being modern. In all that he says and does he betrays a guilty conscience and the impression of a bewildered individual pulled in two diametrically opposite directions. He is in a dilemma. He can reconcile himself neither to Sita nor to Draupadi. In this helpless oscillation he has lost his moorings. The result is the hypocrisy, confusion, and flippancy that is discernible today in the attitude of the educated towards sex.

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HUMAN BEINGS IN ADVERSITY

HARBAKSH SINGH

BOTH by precept experience and practice, I have always been an ardent believer in Democracy. I was nurtured on the principles of Democracy as a young man not only at home but also in college, Government College, Lahore, where I was a student of Political Science in B.A., and the seed thus sown was opportunely nourished and watered by the then Congress agitation for freedom in the Punjab, particularly Lahore. Those were the days of the late twenties and early thirties. As a young student I was witness to the hoisting of the National Flag (the tri-colour with the Charkha) by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the banks of the Ravi on 31st December 1929. I was also on the streets of Lahore, with other students during the night when S. Bhagat Singh and his colleagues were hanged in the Lahore Jail. There was tremendous emotional upsurge in the country, particularly among students, against the British colonial rule and a common demand for freedom and democracy. Besides, as a student of Political Science, from whatever I saw of the British Raj and what I was taught or read about the various political systems in the world, Democracy seemed to find a natural berth in my formative mind. And this belief was further strengthened and fortified by my experience of changing regimes in Malaya during the Second World War. It was the British colonial rule first, before the Japanese invaded the Peninsula, a colonial rule of absolute and unquestioned authority over the local Asiatic population and unabashed European superiority of the worst type. Separate clubs and hotels one saw in India, but here even buses, bus stands and railway compartments were separate for Europeans and Asiatics. It was common to see a sign-board announcing non-admittance to both 'Asiatics and Dogs'. This was followed by military rule of the Japanese, a rule which was most ruthless, despotic and arbitrary. A mere Military Police Corporal's writ reigned supreme over a whole district and it was common sight to see an alleged offender hung up on public view on a telegraph pole just sufficiently high to allow his toes to touch the ground, or a human head stuck up on a pole at a cross-road in the middle of the town, with a placard displayed beside it, intimating to the public the nature of the offence, which might be anything from stealing rations to raising a hand against a soldier of TENNO-HIKA (the Son of God, The

[This is the larger part of the Guest of Honour's Address to the meeting organised by the Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy on 17 May 1971 to mark the birth anniversary of the late Col. Leslie Sawhny. General Harbaksh Singh is one of our most distinguished soldiers. The Leslie Sawhny Programme completed three years of very worthwhile pioneering effort at the end of March 1971, and is certainly, by reason of its work, entitled to the encouragement and support of all who cherish democracy and desire its continuance in India.—*Ed.*]

Emperor of Japan). This was rule through terror. When the Japanese quit and surrendered at the end of the war, before the British occupation forces arrived, there was a month's interval in certain parts of Malaya, including where I was, where there was no Government, no law and order and the law of the jungle prevailed. There were inter-racial riots, mass murders, brigandage, arson, loot and torturing for pleasure—a complete reversion by human beings to animalism. This I had already witnessed on a smaller scale in the Prisoners of War Camps under the Japanese captivity and I came to the conclusion that unless sufficiently made aware of and trained and guided in their obligations, responsibilities, rights and privileges, human beings are apt to give way to their animal instincts. Since Democracy is essentially the rule of the people, by the people and for the people, I felt it appropriate to this occasion, in furtherance of the aims of the Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy, that I should pass on to you some of my experiences of the behaviour of human beings in adversity.

The first jolt came on the afternoon of the 16th of February 1942 at the official handing over of the Indian Prisoners of War by the British to the Japanese. We had marched to the Race Course in Singapore, where this ceremony took place, in military order and discipline strictly by regiments, units and groups, and sat there accordingly, with officers in the front row as normal. The ceremony over, the Japanese Officer in charge handed us over to General Mohan Singh of what we came to know for the first time as the newly raised Indian National Army. General Mohan Singh then formally announced the inauguration of his Army and enjoined upon all prisoners of war to join it under his leadership. Failing to elicit spontaneous response from the officer prisoners of war in the front row, he ordered, in a pique all officers to remove their badges of rank and declared that from then on they would be equal in status to the Sepoys and their rank would be restored only when they joined the Indian National Army. This announcement was a signal for the soldiers to openly defy their officers and in some cases jeer and spit at them. Order and discipline were cast to the winds! There were differences among the men too who, to seek security and sustenance, ganged up in communal, denominational and regional camps without any regard for old friendships, loyalties or other considerations. There was struggle for survival, even within the groups every one was for self. Individuals were scrounging for food, hiding and hoarding it for leaner days. There was an epidemic of thefts among the Prisoners of War. Human nature was coming out in its true and basic colours. Animal instincts had got the better of everything else. It was relapse into animalism. What was clearly noticeable though was that this relapse was only confined to the illiterate, the ignorant, the leaderless sepoys and not generally amongst the educated officers, barring a few exceptions, proving beyond doubt that before the masses can be given their rights and privileges in a Democracy, they should be made conscious, through education and training, of their obligations and responsibilities towards their fellow beings and the State. Hence

the importance of the Programme of Training for Democracy which you have so nobly undertaken and which, although it may seem only a drop in the ocean, is none-the-less a drop and drops make the ocean!

Now to give you an example which was an exception to the rule; that is the extremely selfish and instinctive behaviour on the part of an officer. At one stage fairly early during the period of our captivity, when a lot of propaganda, canvassing and coercion were taking place to compel officers to join the Indian National Army, I with four other senior officers, who were considered by the Indian National Army authorities as 'Obstructionists', were confined in a concentration camp in the hope that we might see light and join the Indian National Army. In order that we might have a common kitchen (which entailed the boiling of a handful of rice, our daily ration, anyway) we decided to pool any resources of food that we might have collected individually, and we were able to collect between us five about three tins of corn flour, four tins of condensed milk, two tins of golden-treacle syrup (quite a treat this latter) and some dal and so on. So for the first few days for the morning meal at least, we could have a bit of porridge with a tea-spoonful of condensed milk and a dash of treacle—delightful fare! Now suddenly one of us, a senior officer (no names), decided to go extremely religious (not an uncommon trend among Prisoners of War) and requested that his meals be served to him inside a small cubicle he had specially erected in one corner of the barrack for meditation and prayer before each meal. There seemed nothing wrong with it and meals were served to him accordingly. One morning having handed him the plate with some rice and dal, I went back to ask if he needed some more, and as I lifted the curtain of the sanctum sanctorum what do I see but that the Gentleman had an open tin of Polson's butter in his lap and was licking his fingers. The cat was out of the bag—the purpose of special prayers before each meal was obvious! However, in deference to his seniority and age I kept the incident to myself, although hoping against hope that he might quietly hand over for common use whatever was left of the butter, but not our friend and elder. I think by then he had had enough of the concentration camp and left us within a day or two to join the Indian National Army as a Brigade Commander. The tin of butter didn't help him much, it seems, as in spite of escaping the rigours of the Prisoners of War Camp his health gave way on return to India and he died not very long after.

I have cited this case not out of malice but as an example of over-bearing pressures exerted on man by the animal instincts which he inherits at birth, in this case the instinct of self-preservation. And I can tell you from my own experience that it is all the time a tough battle that your character and conscience, which you cultivate as a result of upbringing, education and training, have to fight against these instincts.

I cite an opposite example, that of myself this time. Towards the end of our imprisonment. we were stationed in a Prisoner of War Camp at a place called Kluang, about 80 miles from Johore Baru, under the Japanese Air Force this time. The Air Force Officer we found were generally more

reasonable and kind than the Army, mainly because they were all educated, and some youngsters were straight from their universities. In this camp I had been a victim of typhoid followed by beri-beri and there was another officer younger than myself who was also suffering from the latter ailment. By virtue of acting as Staff Officer of the Camp, I had developed quite good relations with the Japanese Air Force Officer who was in charge of our camp. Mentioning my beri-beri one day, I requested him to procure for me some vitamin 'B' injections from his doctor so that I might have a chance of pulling through the Prisoner of War days. After quite a long wait, one morning this officer secretively handed me a carton (blue in colour) which I hurriedly put in my pocket and on my way back to camp I was calculating from the size of the carton that there would be at least 24 phials in it. I rushed straight to the officer who was my co-sufferer and took out the carton to count the number of phials. To my horror the carton was practically empty except for two phials in one corner. However, something was better than nothing and we both arranged with our own doctor that we should receive one injection each the next morning. The morning seemed so long in coming and before the sun was out, we fetched up in front of the doctor's hut made of elephant grass and bamboos. The doctor was ready with his syringe. He pulled out one phial, looked at it against the sky, tapped its neck before dexterously breaking it and filling the syringe, and he was ready to give the first injection. I pushed my younger friend ahead and insisted that he should have the injection first. I was trying to be chivalrous. First injection over, the doctor began to repeat the process. He looked at the second phial against the sky. He tapped its neck. He came out of his hut to have another look and heavy heartedly announced that there were no contents in the phial, although it was intact and perfectly sealed—obviously an error in filling. I don't mind admitting that the earth seemed to slip from under my feet. My friend who had had the first injection was more indignant than myself and felt he had done me down. Although terribly downhearted, I pretended to make light of the whole affair and consoled my friend by saying that after all what was there in one injection, I would get more of them from the same officer. This was all said in a matter-of-fact way, as inwardly the shock was still there. But let me tell you that after a little more thought, a revelation dawned on me. My better self came to the fore. Had I not done a good turn to a fellow being? This was what was called self-sacrifice and human compassion. I sensed a feeling of spiritual exhilaration. And what was obviously an accident, my sub-conscious mind changed to a voluntary sacrifice, and it had such an effect on my whole being that from that day onwards I felt better and better in health. It might be psychological, I don't know, but it certainly stirred my soul.

I give you another example. At the end of the war a War Crimes Investigation Commission came to our camp and lined up in front of us all the Japanese Officers in station, including the local general, who had been very harsh to us and treated us like dirt, especially towards the

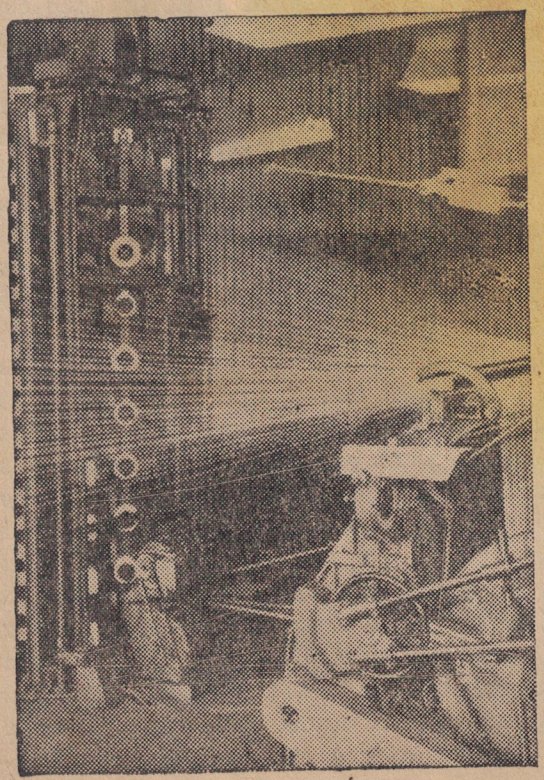
end of the war when things were not going in favour of the Japanese. The Commission desired us to point our finger at the Japanese officers who had mal-treated us. Now we had known of the Commission's arrival and had resolved among ourselves not to lay blame on any Japanese, as after all we were lucky to have come out of the war alive and there was nothing to be gained from reprisals through the hands of another Master. So we unanimously declared that we had nothing against any of the Japanese. This must have touched the heart of the Japanese general, for after the commission had left, he came over to our camp and calling us out, stood there in front of us with tears rolling down his cheeks. After a while he said that he had come to atone for his mistakes, and that we Indians were spiritually much higher than the Japanese. He then saluted and retraced his steps to his own camp.

I would end my talk with the portrayal of a truly horrid spectacle of human behaviour under the impulse of self-preservation. Once vitality had gone down with malnutrition, two ailments were most prevalent amongst Prisoners of War—that of tuberculosis and insanity. As far as the former was concerned, the moment it was diagnosed as such, death was clearly writ not only in your heart but on your face also. You dreaded to see a doctor lest he should dub you a TB patient. To avoid contact with others, TB patients were kept in a barbed wire enclosure within the Prisoners of War camp. Inside it there were about seven barracks terraced down a slope and patients were moved down from one barrack to the other according to their expectancy of life. In the last barrack the expectancy of life was less than 24 hours. When dead, you were picked up by your limbs and thrown into a deep pit and buried. In this last barrack, patients lay on a rough wooden floor with nothing or perhaps, a gunny bag, under them for bedding. Some would have a similar rag to cover themselves. Under his head for a pillow, each patient would have all his worldly belongings tied in a rag. There might be a bit of dried chapati made out of beetroot or tapioca, a cake or two of brown sugar and, in very exceptional cases, a tin of Polson's butter, and perhaps a few currency notes or coins. There were no regular doctors or medical orderlies to look after these patients. They lay there unattended and helpless. Every morning a couple of medical orderlies would come to the barrack to pick up the dead and throw them into the pit next door. But what they invariably found was that the dead had been stripped stark naked by their fellow patients in the ward and there were complaints and counter-complaints of scuffles for the belongings of the dead. Since many patients could not either sit or walk, as soon as their fellow patient was dead, or nearly so, they would roll on the floor up to him and fight for his belongings like vultures, knowing fully well that their own end was not very far. No amount of arguing with them had any effect. How incredible ! I myself would not have believed it if I had not seen it with my own eyes. Such is our human nature—our basic self—entirely subject to animal instincts. You cannot expect such human beings to subscribe to Democracy. Hence, I repeat, the importance and necessity of educa-

tion, training and development of character which are the laudable aims of the Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy, for the furtherance of which and in the memory of whose initiator, Duggie Sawhny, we are gathered here this evening. We could afford to, as indeed we must, run thousands of such programmes throughout our country to make our people conscious not only of their rights and privileges, but also of their obligations and responsibilities towards the democratic form of Government which is, without doubt, most suited to the genius and culture of our people.

(*Continued from page* 5)

some lawyers, liberal, supporters of democracy, etc., despite realising what the present situation is and which way all the trends are leading, still will argue that the Supreme Court should not have this power and it should be taken away from it. Clearly just as war cannot be left to soldiers, finance to bankers, Government to politicians, the economy to economists, so justice must not be left solely to lawyers. Many of them concentrate so much on a few thick trees of their choice that they fail to see the wood as a whole." The bus arriving, they climbed in, all looking quite thoughtful.



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SEX : DILEMMA OF THE EDUCATED

K. N. PANNIKAR

IN recent years there has been a visible change in the attitude of educated Indians towards sex. A certain degree of freedom and permissiveness is being advocated and practised. To some it is desirable and welcome; to others, despicable and alarming. Welcome because it is claimed to be one of the many manifestations of the transition of Indian society from tradition to modernity; despicable because it is deemed unindian and immoral. The advocates of change, mainly the liberal-educated and the educated-affluent, identify it with modernity and denigrate the non-changers as traditionalists, conservatives and religious obscurantists. But interestingly enough, the modernity of the modernists is suspect. In fact, they are traditionalists masquerading in the name of modernity.

What is the traditional Indian attitude towards sex? Primitive society in India like all other primitive societies, allowed considerable sexual freedom. Later very severe restrictions came to be applied, especially on women. The ideal Indian woman, as portrayed in our epics, was not even expected to allow thoughts about any man, except her husband, to enter her mind. To cite the most popular and oft-quoted example we have the story of the fire ordeal of Sita, with both generous and ungenerous interpretations strung on to it. This, however, is nothing but a general feature of a patriarchal society. The male in that set-up who was responsible for acquiring food held his women sexually bound to him and to him alone, whereas he as the patriarch claimed sexual freedom and permissiveness. Polygamy was permitted but extra-marital relations were socially tabu. Adultery when detected was severely punished. Understandably, society pointed its accusing finger not at the male but at the female. She was excommunicated, hunted out of the village, and in certain cases even mutilated, whereas the erring male, though perhaps responsible for the error of the female, was allowed to go scot free. So the patriarchal society conferred upon the male extensive sexual privileges. He claimed these during the earlier period on the basis of his control over food acquisition or production and later, of his control over property and means of production. Apart from the necessities of the family and inheritance set-up, the egocentrism and selfish motives of the male played a major role in the development of female chastity concept.

In sharp contrast to this is the pattern of sexual relations in matriarchal societies, an ideal form of which existed in some parts of India down to the 20th century. The control and inheritance of property was through the female and hence polyandry was common, women enjoying considerable freedom. Their relationship with their husbands was simply sexual, without any responsibilities on either side. The husband was not even respon-

sible for feeding his offspring. As a result the husband could be asked at any time to terminate his relations with his wife without any ceremony, the wife at the same time taking another husband if she liked. Change of husband or husbands was very casual. The common method of establishing a relationship was to ask the female for facilities to 'sleep a night'. 'Night' might continue for years or it might even end just after one. A couple of village women sitting and discussing the sexual prowess of a man who had been the husband of each one of them at some time was not a very uncommon feature. Evidently the matriarchal society woman was no counterpart of Sita. The less popular but certainly not less real Draupadi came nearer her. Therefore, the concept of a single ideal of Indian womanhood, developed through the ages, in matters of sex and chastity, is but a myth.

The male-female position in society, which by and large conditioned sexual attitudes, underwent radical changes in the 19th century. The introduction of liberal education struck at the authoritarianism of Hindu society and helped to replace faith by reason. To begin with, the newly educated class came out in force to fight the monstrosities practised in the name of religion. But soon they turned towards more pressing social problems. The very first that attracted their attention was the miserable and depraved condition of Hindu women—indeed publicly venerated but privately despised. In the major parts of the country women were condemned to the privacy of the dingy rooms of unventilated houses and the darkness of the ugly purdha to share a husband with many co-wives, and ultimately to achieve heaven through sati after this continuous spell of hell on earth. Such conditions were denounced as inhuman and brutal and the immediate emancipation of woman was demanded. A total reexamination of the man-woman relationship was incidental to this new thinking. Among the series of reforms advocated, the emphasis was on monogamy, a demand fulfilled only in independent India through legislation. The existing relationship which permitted polygamy was glaringly portrayed as uncivilized, if not primitive, and therefore, it was pointed out that to move with the times and to move with the world it was necessary to shed this traditional garb. Monogamy was championed and accepted as a part of social modernization, especially in the wake of nationalistic sentiments. In this enthusiasm the wider implication of the patriach being deprived of his age-old privileges was lost sight of. The acceptance of the new norms restricted socially permissible sexual relations to a single spouse only and anything outside that came to carry social stigma. The patriarch was sexually chained. The situatinon was worsened by the state control over divorces and the prohibition of prostitution. Confronted by his son while coming out of a brothel, a great writer is reported to have said—'I prefer the stimulated interest of the prostitute to the quiet condescending acquiescence of your mother'. This monotony in sex thus became a vital problem for the male in Indian 'reformed society'. The western monogamous societies from which the reformers took their cue provided for innocent marginal deviations, which were not permitted in India. For the patriarch, therefore, sexual

possibilities, innocent or otherwise, were confined to his own wife.

The attitude of the educated class who are clamouring today for more sexual freedom and permissiveness is nothing but a reaction to this monotony. To the uneducated, the poorest section of the society, who toil for two square meals a day, these problems, in the light in which the educated see them, do not matter at all. They continue in their age-old strain, indeed with deviations which are accidental and not the least conscious. The educated on the other hand consciously try for change in order to find new fields to satisfy their sexual urge. They endeavour to dismiss the existing social restrictions as outdated and traditional and attempt to identify greater permissiveness with modernity. They seem to argue that innocent intimacy would help to release tension, which release, according to them, is extremely important in a modern society. Even the indulgence in complete sexual relationship they view as the satisfaction of a biological urge, without morals being involved in it. This plea of modernity, however, is a convenient mask; in reality it is the resurrection of the traditional patriarchal attitude. It is not even a tradition-modernity continuum, but a tradition resurrection—a resurrection that is being attempted because of desperation.

The educated modernists are in fact more traditional than the uneducated traditionalists. The male in India today is nothing but a reformed version of the old patriarch. He is by and large the earner, the modern counterpart of the food acquirer and hence the dominant member of the family. The sexual permissiveness he is seeking, it may be noted, is simply for the male and not for the female. To give an example, a friend of mine once said that he would not mind his wife having extra-marital relations if she so liked, as he himself would like to have them too. His brother, an educated person, chided him for his un-Indian view. I learnt later, not to my surprise, that the champion of the chastity of Indian womanhood had illicit sexual relations with his lady secretary. Here, of course, is the patriarch in the most naked form. The clamour for permissiveness is traditionalism in the changed context masquerading in the guise of modernity. The male is eager to claim privileges, as the patriarch did, without conceding the same to his female counterpart.

In the current environment, it is, however, not possible to keep the female under subjection for ever. Emancipated from the shackles of purdha and steadily emerging as an earning member of the family she is bound to vie with her male counterpart for equality and if possible even to assume the position of the matriarchal woman. This latitude towards independence is so far marginal not because of biological factors, for the "freedom of the womb" is almost an established fact today, but because of material dependence, though educational opportunities and legislative measures for property right are bound to hasten the trend to independence. A recent attempt in the Punjab to reverse the provisions of the Hindu Code bill regarding the female's right to property is an attempt to stem this tendency, needless to say by the partriarch. Religion, custom, and tradition are invoked to serve his selfish interest.

(*Continued on page* 23)

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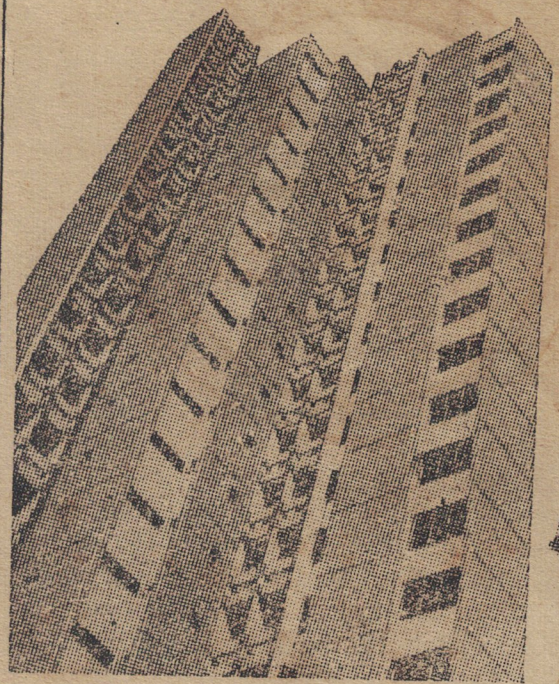

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